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ABSTRACT

A profile questionnaire was developed and sent to 112 early childhood educators in six southwestern states. Facts and opinions were solicited. The questions covered the following items: (1) sex and age of respondent; (2) ethnic heritage; (3) college degree and major subject; (4) length of classroom teaching experience; (5) length of time as professor in early childhood education; (6) kind of institutions served in; (7) satisfaction with present time allotments and preferences for change; (8) impediments to attainment of ideal use of time; (9) satisfaction with present salary; (10) memberships in teaching associations; (11) hours spent each month in unpaid volunteer activities that serve young children; (12) opinion on compulsory schooling for children under six; (13) opinion on age scope of ideal early childhood undergraduate teacher education programs; (14) opinion on proportion of men teachers to women teachers in early childhood education; (15) opinion on multicultural education in early childhood teacher education programs; (16) opinion on competency based education for teacher education programs; (17) opinion on the part the young child should have in determining curriculum. From data collected from the above questions a profile is drawn of the typical southwestern early childhood education professor. (JD)

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The Southwestern Early Childhood Education Professorship: A Profile

By Chester E. Youngblood, Ed.D. Visiting Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico. Dr. Youngblood is a former primary teacher and principal and elementary education professor.

As one new to the early childhood education professorship in the fall of 1975, I felt a need to know more about my new colleagues in the six southwestern states of Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. One hundred twelve southwestern professors who were full-time faculty members with an assignment more than half in early childhood education (teaching and/or research and/or administration) were identified in the 50 NCATE approved institutions of the six states. A profile questionnaire of 26 items was developed and sent to each of those 112 southwestern early childhood education professors during November or December of 1975. With the use of follow-up procedures, a usable questionnaire return of 72.3%, or 81 out of 112, was achieved by early January of 1976. Since not every responding professor answered every question, the data are presented below in terms of the number and percentage who did answer a particular question.

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Sex, Age, and Ethnic Heritage

19.8% (16) of the 81 professors were male; 80.2% (65) were female. 37.0% (30) were under 36, 54.4% (44) were from 36 through 55, and 8.6% (7) were 56 or over. 7.4% (6) had a Black ethnic heritage, 3.7% (3) had a

Native American ethnic heritage, 3.7% (3) had a Spanish-speaking ethnic heritage and 1.2% (1) had an Asian-American ethnic heritage. These four minority ethnic heritages totaled 16.0% (15).

Preparation for Professorship

60.5% (49) of the 81 professors had an earned doctoral degree. 1.2% (1) had as the highest earned degree a specialist in education degree, and the remaining 38.3% (31) had the master's degree as the highest earned degree. As to further formal study beyond the doctoral degree, 58.3% (28) of the 48 doctoral degree professors who answered the question had none, 16.6% (8) had less than one-half of a year, 14.6% (7) had one-half of a year but less than one year, 4.2% (2) had one year but less than one and one-half years, 2.1% (1) had one and one-half years but less than two years, and 4.2% (2) had two years or more of further formal study. Of the 31 master's degree professors, only 3.2% (1) had no further formal study. 35.5% (11) had two years or more of further study, 12.9% (4) had one and one-half years but less than two years, 12.9% (4) had one year but less than one and one-half years, 12.9% (4) had one-half of a year but less than one year, and 22.6% (7) had less than one-half of a year of further study beyond the master's degree.

As to the major of the highest degree, 60.0% (48) of 80 professors either had a major in early childhood education (37.5% or 30) or in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis in early childhood education (22.5% or 18). 13.7% (11) had highest degree majors in elementary education, and 6.3% (5) had highest degree majors in child development. 6.3% (5) had an emphasis in early childhood education combined with one of the five following areas: reading, reading readiness, child development, child

development and administration of higher education, and administration. The remaining eleven (13.7%) had highest degree majors in the eleven following areas: administration and supervision, curriculum and instruction, childhood socialization and social psychology, counseling, educational psychology, elementary education and guidance, elementary education and supervision, psychology, special education, supervision and curriculum development, and teacher education.

Professional Experience

Including the 1975-76 academic year, 25.9% (21) of the 81 professors had been in the teaching profession (all levels) from one to nine years, 42.0% (34) had been in the teaching profession from ten to nineteen years, 22.2% (18) had been in the teaching profession from twenty to twenty-nine years, and 9.9% (8) had been in the teaching profession thirty years or more. In reference to classroom teaching experience with children under nine years of age, only 6.2% (5) had none. 70.4% (57) had from one to nine years of such experience, 22.2% (18) had from ten to nineteen years of such experience, and 1.2% (1) had from twenty to twenty-nine years of such experience. Including the 1975-76 academic year, only 13.5% (11) of the professors had been early childhood education professors ten years or more. 8.6% (7) had been early childhood education professors from ten to nineteen years, 3.7% (3) had been early childhood education professors from twenty to twenty-nine years, and 1.2% (1) had been one for thirty years or more. The remaining 86.5% (70) had been early childhood education professors from one to nine years.

Nature of Position

92.6% (75) of the 81 professors worked in a public institution; 7.4% (6) worked in a private institution. Only 52.5% (42) out of the 80

professors who answered the question, "What percentage of your assignment this semester or quarter is in early childhood education?", indicated that they had a 100% assignment in early childhood education. 26.3% (21) had an assignment that was more than 50% but less than 75% in early childhood education, and 21.2% (17) had an assignment that was at least 75% but less than 100% in early childhood education.

Teaching early childhood education classes was the major assignment in early childhood education of 76.3% (61) of 80: 41.3% (33) taught a combination of undergraduate and graduate early childhood education classes, 27.5% (22) taught only undergraduate early childhood education classes, and 7.5% (6) taught only graduate early childhood education classes. 12.5% (10) gave as their major early childhood education assignment a combination of leadership of the early childhood education program and teaching early childhood education classes. 3.7% (3) reported as their major assignment a combination of teaching early childhood education classes and laboratory school teaching duties. Another 3.7% (3) reported as their major assignment the leadership of the early childhood education program. Only one professor reported a major assignment of research and/or writing in early childhood education. One professor had a major assignment in child development, and another had a major assignment that was a combination of teaching early childhood education classes and administering the child development laboratory.

Job Satisfaction

Only 38.3% (31) of the 81 professors were satisfied with their present time allotments. 23.5% (19) would most like to spend more time in research and/or writing in early childhood education. 11.1% (9) would most like to

spend more time in teaching a combination of undergraduate and graduate early childhood education classes, 7.4% (6) would most like to spend more time teaching undergraduate early childhood education classes, and 3.7% (3) would most like to spend more time teaching graduate early childhood education classes. 8.6% (7) would most like to spend more time in the leadership of the early childhood education program, and 3.7% (3) would most like to spend more time in a combination of teaching graduate early childhood education classes and doing research and/or writing in early childhood education. As to the three remaining professors, one would most like to spend more time in study, one would most like to spend more time in further formal study, and one would most like to have more time allotted for administration.

Only 17.9% (14) of the 78 who answered the question on what main condition impedes the attainment of an ideal use of their time indicated that they had no such impediment. 28.2% (22) reported that a heavy teaching load was the main impediment. 14.1% (11) stated that lack of clerical and/or graduate student assistance was the main impediment, and another 14.1% (11) stated that duties outside of early childhood education was the main impediment. 5.1% (4) reported that heavy administrative leadership duties for the early childhood education program was the main impediment. 9.0% (7) indicated a main condition that was a combination of two or three of the above factors. 2.6% (2) indicated a main condition that was the time and travel needed in the supervision of student teachers. The remaining seven professors (9.0%) gave the seven following main impediments to an ideal use of their time: "planning"; "laboratory work--meet with student teachers"; "do not have my doctorate yet--so cannot teach graduate classes"; "department emphasis is on teacher training rather than research";

"amount of time allotted by university for administrative loads"; "committees, university and community"; "amount of time spent in course preparation because this is my first year as a university professor and am teaching all of the courses for the first time".

Considering their education, experience, professional achievements, the cost of living, and the responsibilities and expectations of their position, only 30.0% (24) of 80 found their 1975-76 actual salaries fine. When these factors were considered, 70.0% (56) believed that their 1975-76 salary should have been more than it was. 1.2% (1) believed that it should have been less than $1.000 more, 18.8% (15) believed it should have been from $1.000 to $1,999 more, 23.8% (19) believed it should have been from $2,000 to $3,999 more, 20.0% (16) believed it should have been from $4,000 to $5,999 more, 2.5% (2) believed it should have been from $6,000 to $7,999 more, 1.2% (1) believed it should have been from $8,000 to $9,999 more, and 2.5% (2) believed it should have been $12,000 or more.

Memberships, Offices and Service

82.3% (65) of 79 professors were members of NAEYC, 58.8% (47) of 80 professors were members of ACEI, and 41.2% (33) of 80 professors were members of the American Association of Elementary-Kindergarden-Nursery Educators. 41.2% (33) of 80 professors held from one to four official positions from the local level through the national level in these three organizations. 26.3% (21) held one position, 8.7% (7) held two positions, 5.0% (4) held three positions, and 1.2% (1) held four positions.

86.5% (70) of the 81 professors usually spent one or more hours each month in unpaid volunteer activities that served young children in some direct and/or indirect way. 38.3% (31) usually spent from one to four hours in such service, 23.5% (19) usually spent from five to nine hours in such

service, and 24.7% (20) usually spent ten or more hours in such service every month.

Professional Opinion

61.0% (47) of 77 were opposed to compulsory schooling for young children under six. 23.4% (18) favored compulsory schooling beginning at age five, and 11.7% (9) favored compulsory schooling beginning at age four. As to the remaining three (3.9%), one favored compulsory schooling for five year olds "only if they are ready in all areas of development", one favored compulsory schooling "for children whose home environments do not provide minimal levels of support", and the third said "this depends on the ability of the child".

25.6% (20) of 78 believed that the age scope of the ideal undergraduate early childhood teacher education program would be from conception or birth through eight years of age. An equal percentage (25.6%) and number (20) believed that the age scope for an ideal program would be from three years through eight years of age. 24.4% (19) believed it would be from two years through eight years of age. 7.7% (6) believed it would be from four years through eight years of age, 6.4% (5) believed it would be from three years through five years of age, and 2.6% (2) believed it would be from two years through five years of age. The remaining six responses (7.7%) had one of each of the following age scopes: five years through eight years, birth through five years, birth through six years, conception through seven years, birth through nine years, and birth through ten years.

53.3% (45) of 80 believed that, ideally, approximately one-half of all early childhood teachers should be men. 26.2% (21) believed that, ideally, from a fourth to a third of all early childhood teachers should be men. 12.5% (10) wrote in answers that, while either favoring more men in the

early childhood classroom or being unopposed to such, emphasized the importance of putting the priority on obtaining well qualified teachers for the early childhood classrooom, irregardless of sex, rather than on a proportion ideal or quota for men. One of the remaining four (5.0%) felt the present situation of only a few men in the early childhood classroom is a quite satisfactory one. Another answered, "definitely more men--as many as possible." A third felt that it all may depend upon the socio-economic situation in the school and/or area, and a fourth found it impossible to choose an ideal proportion of men but would like to see more men in early childhood.

In reference to multicultural education in early childhood teacher education programs, only one professor (1.2%) out of 80 felt it was not needed. 46.3% (37) believed that multicultural education should be an integral part of all early childhood education courses. 20.0% (16) believed that, in addition to it being an integral part of every early childhood education class, there should be at least one elective course in multicultural education. 32.5% (26) believed that, in addition to it being an integral part of every early childhood education, there should be at least one required course in multicultural education.

As to how much of an undergraduate early childhood teacher education program should be competency based, 9.5% (7) of 74 said none of it should be. 39.1% (29) believed that some of it should be competency based, 12.2% (9) believed that about one-half of it should be competency based, 21.6% (16) believed that much of it should be competency based, and 13.5% (10) believed that all of it should be competency based. Of the remaining three professors (4.1%), one stated that a competency based program should be one of the options. Another stated "it's an individual matter." The

The third one preferred to speak in terms of what a good early childhood teacher education program should include rather than in terms of what proportion of it should be competency based.

64.5% (51) of 79 believed that the young child should have an important part in determining the early childhood education curriculum. 11.5% (9) believed that the young child should largely determine the curriculum, and 2.5% (2) believed that the young child should completely determine the curriculum. 7.6% (6) believed that the young child should have only a little part in determining the curriculum. 8.8% (7) wrote in answers that centered around the importance of considering the growth and development, interests, needs, and experiences of young children when developing the early childhood curriculum. One of the remaining four (5.1%) professors wrote that the early childhood curriculum should be "determined by teacher-parent-child". Another wrote that "the young child should always be included in planning and developing his or her own program." A third professor wrote that "the curriculum should be centered around the yong child's growth and development but should also emphasize the environment and subject matter." The fourth wrote:

> The "young child" is a misleading and/or confusing term as used here. If you mean each child should have considerable latitude in determining what activities he will engage in daily, I'd say to a large extent. However, the teacher has the primary role in setting an environment in which "curriculum" offerings are so broadly ranged and full of alternatives that the children's choices can be wholesome, benificial and maximally facilitate their developmental learning. It is in this sense then, the teacher has prime responsibility for setting parameters of curriculum and children function by making choices within these parameters. However, if the teacher's parameters are too limited, the needs and interests of young children must be the factor that forces the expansion of the teacher's parameters. It is mutual and interactive in nature.

Summary Profile

The typical southwestern early childhood education professor in NCATE

approved institutions is a woman, from 36 to 55 years of age, of non-minority group ethnic heritage. She has a doctoral degree with no formal study beyond the doctoral degree, and her major for the doctoral degree was either early childhood education or curriculum and instruction with an emphasis in early childhood education. She has been in the teaching profession from ten to nineteen years, including from one to nine years of classroom teaching experience with children under nine years of age. She has been an early childhood education professor for less than ten years. She works in a public institution, has an assignment that is 100% in early childhood education, and teaching early childhood education classes is her major assignment within early childhood education.

She is not satisfied with her present time allotments and would like to spend more time in either teaching early childhood education classes or in research and/or writing in early childhood education. The main condition that impedes the attainment of an ideal use of her time is a heavy teaching load or the lack of clerical and/or graduate student assistance or duties outside of early childhood education. Considering her education, experience, professional achievements, the cost of living, and the responsibilities and expectations of her position, she believes her academic year salary should be $2,000 more than it actually is.

She is a member of NAEYC and ACEI, but she is not a member of the American Association of Elementary-Kindergarden-Nursery Educators. She holds no official positions from the local level through the national level in these three organizations. She usually spends from one to nine hours each month in unpaid volunteer activities that serve young children in some direct and/or indirect way.

She is opposed to compulsory schooling for young children under six.

She believes that the age scope of the ideal early childhood undergraduate teacher education program would be either from conception or birth through eight years of age or from three years through eight years of age. She thinks that, ideally, approximately one-half of all early childhood teachers should be men. As to multicultural education in early childhood teacher education programs, she believes that, in addition to it being an integral part of every childhood education class, there should be either an elective course or a required course in multicultural education. She believes that some or about one-half or much of an undergraduate early childhood teacher education program should be competency based. She also believes that the young child should have an important part in determining the early childhood education curriculum.